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SUBJECT: OSCE/PERMANENT COUNCIL: STATEMENT ON REPORT BY  
HOM KOSOVO GULDIMANN

11. Post is authorized to present the following statement at the September 4 Permanent Council meeting in Vienna.

Begin text:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States joins other delegations in welcoming the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Guldumann and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for the UNMIK, Ambassador Lamberto Zannier.

It is fair to say, Ambassador Guldumann, as your comprehensive and helpful report notes, that this year has truly been one of transition, even transformation. The mission and role of the international community in Kosovo has changed substantially and clearly has needed to adapt to the new situation.

One of the most significant aspects of this transformation has been finding a meaningful role in Kosovo's society for the Serbian community. Many Serbs, as your report highlights, have been coerced by Belgrade into dropping out of any public role, starting of course with the boycott of last year's Parliamentary elections. But, the United States is encouraged by some tentative steps the Serbian community in Kosovo is taking to re-engage in Kosovo's politics and municipal administration. We hope the Mission will do all it can to continue to encourage this development.

In that respect, of course, Serbia's attitude and role will be critical. Belgrade must continue to demonstrate a willingness to step up and work out practical ways to engage with the Kosovar authorities and the international community to ease the plight of the Serbian community in Kosovo. We look to them for leadership in this important area.

The United States will continue to assist Kosovo as it builds its multiethnic government and its democratic institutions. We would note that more than 45 countries have now recognized Kosovo's independence, including over two-thirds of the European Union and NATO, and a majority of UN Security Council members. The United States will continue to assist Kosovo as it builds its multiethnic government and its democratic institutions.

Kosovo needs to focus on building its multiethnic democracy, protecting minority rights, protecting religious freedom, creating institutions that can deliver for its people economically. These are the things that will ensure a bright future for Kosovo and all its citizens.

As has been the case, Mr. Chairman, the United States remains eager to work constructively with all participating States to identify ways this organization can continue to contribute to Kosovo's stability and the welfare and security of its people.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

IF GEORGIA IS RAISED BY THE RUSSIANS:

Kosovo was a unique case and not a precedent for any other conflict, neither Georgia's breakaway territories nor any other separatist movement. Kosovo was never a breakaway territory, but had a status recognized by the UN Security Council.

Unlike in Kosovo, there is no UN-sanctioned international administration in Abkhazia or South Ossetia. There is no international security force operating under UN authorization or mandate. There are no security guarantees to protect different ethnic communities. In fact, Russia has failed for nearly two decades to create conditions which would allow the return of refugees.

So, quite in contrast to what occurred with Kosovo, Russia has deliberately avoided using available avenues to bring resolution to Abkhazia and South Ossetia.  
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